

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Writing Undergraduate Thesis

Writing an undergraduate thesis is mandatory for university students. Indonesian qualification framework defines an undergraduate thesis as a scientific study where students have to apply theory and knowledge to create a solution for a social problem. Badreddine (2019) thesis is a stated idea or theory that is being discussed in a logical sense. In general, it refers to academic paper projects conducted by students at the end of their educational program. Writing a thesis is a difficult task and the most challenging process. To complete a thesis, students need physical, mental, and often financial strength. Moreover, many steps need to be passed. Starting from the determination of the title and topic, the proposal seminar exam, data collection, to the trial or also called the comprehensive exam. In the final stage, students will present their research results in front of the examiner lecturer (Fitria, 2022). This process is often feared by students. The reason is that students will be questioned with various questions to test the validity of the research. So, it is not strange that students feel trepidation and fear.

To write an undergraduate thesis, the students start from observing a phenomenon in society, making a research question, building a research design, collecting data, analyze data, and writing down the result. It is an individual piece of work whereby each student is supervised by one lecturer, and they have to defend their work two or three times on: research proposal, research result, and knowledge comprehension. Students also need to pay attention to selecting topics for research, planning realistic time, and understand the things related to the writing of scientific papers. Without it, students can't finish their studies on time (Fitria, 2022).

Writing an undergraduate thesis can be difficult sometimes. Through the research in recent years, it is found that a considerable number of undergraduate degree theses in colleges and universities, especially in ordinary colleges and universities, are superficial, lack demonstration, non-standard writing, and unsatisfactory writing level. From the content of the undergraduate thesis “teaching and learning”, improper guidance methods of teachers and students’ fatigue to cope are the main reasons for the serious decline in the quality of the thesis. (Cao & Xiang, 2022). According to Cao & Xiang (2022) there are three reasons why writing a thesis is difficult for students.

The first one is writing time, the writing time of a degree thesis is one of the guarantees of thesis quality, so it is difficult for college students to write a high-quality thesis in a short time. In addition, students usually lack systematic writing training, basic knowledge is not solid, will not flexibly use the professional knowledge to solve practical problems. Second one is with the writing level and research ability, the undergraduate thesis is not only a form of the thesis, but also the result of investigation and research. Articles written without investigation and research should not fall within the scope of the paper. There are countless of studies that shows the students did not know how to write a thesis, and have not carried out any investigation and research. Third is guiding methods. At present, undergraduate thesis writing in colleges and universities follows a fixed pattern. First of all, the students will prompt the title of the paper, or the teacher will draw up multiple topics for the students to choose from. Secondly, the teacher gives guidance according to the student’s writing. Finally, complete a thesis and reply, but with this pattern, there are problems to it.

First, the topic of the thesis is old-fashioned and lacks new ideas. Second is the scope of the topic is not suitable for students’ ability and cannot be put into practice. Third is the form of expression of the paper is single, which

does not reflect the student's ability to use knowledge, but cannot also find, analyze and solve problems. And the fourth one is due to the lack of demonstration of the research content and research methods of the paper, the title and content of the paper have been changed many times in the process of writing, increasing the workload of the instructor.

2.2 Writing Introduction Section

In academic writing. The introduction of a research paper is the most critical and crucial segment in a thesis and is read with the utmost care (Swales, 1990; Gupta, 1995) as it includes the purpose and summary of the thesis and therefore, takes a longer time to organize and write than the other chapters. The introduction section embodies the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective, the significance of the study, limitations or delimitations, and operational definitions (Moten, 2009; Simon, 2011). In some fields, however, an introduction can also cover an overview of the research findings. It will help the readers to understand the context of the research by presenting illustrative examples. The structure of the undergraduate thesis consists of an abstract and five sections: introduction, literature review, method, results and discussion, and conclusion. Lipson (2005) said that the introduction is the most decisive chapter because through this section the writers are required to write enticing paragraphs so that they can convince and engage the readers to read further.

Because of this, the writers have to present the major arguments of the issue by presenting compelling thesis statements and the primary issues they want to investigate. The writers are required to include three points in the introduction chapter. First and foremost, the topic has to offer useful insights on why the topic deserves to be investigated. They have to provide both theoretical and practical clarification. Second, the authors must outline the

approaches taken to study the issue. Thirdly, the authors must offer the evidence upon which they will base their investigation.

Although writing an introduction has benefits, it also comes with difficulties, especially for those who are new to writing thesis. Swales (1990) states that nearly all academic writers encounter difficulties in starting to write the introduction to a research article. This is because writers need to decide how to present their paper informatively in four aspects, including the appropriate amount and type of background knowledge, the authoritative versus the sincere stance, the winsomeness of the appeal to readership, and the honesty of the approach. Swales also found that to convey the same meaning of a single text unit, different speakers of a language will present it in different language forms.

To analyze the introduction section, several researchers used the John Swales CARS model, there are two versions of this model, but for this explanation, it uses the 1990 version. Create-a-Research-Space (CARS) model is a seminal work proposed by Swales (1990). Swales explains that this model presents the phases used to be the protocol for writing research article introductions. It has been used in international journals because it "... primarily reflects research in a big world, in big fields, in big languages, with big journals, big names, and big libraries" (Swales, 2004). This model has three move structures which consist of several stages. Each move and step present the communicative function. Swales also suggests the use of lexical and syntactic signals used to denote movements and steps. The move and step structures are indicated by the use of certain words in the lexical signs. The move and step sentence patterns are thus indicated by the syntactical signals. The table below shows the moves and steps required to analyze the introduction section in a research paper or a thesis.

Table 3.1 Create-a-Research-Space (CARS) Model

Moves	Steps
Move 1	Step 1: Claiming centrality
Establishing a territory	Step 2: Making topic generalization(s)
	Step 3: Reviewing items of previous research.
Move 2	Step 1A: Counter-claiming
Establishing a niche	Step 1B: Indicating a gap
	Step 1C: Question-raising
	Step 1D: Continuing a tradition
Move 3	Step 1A: Outlining purposes
Occupying a niche	Step 1B: Announcing present research
	Step 2: Announcing principal findings
	Step 3: Indicating research article structure

First, move 1, establishing a territory, is composed of three steps, it was mentioned as the phase that claims the purpose of the study, the interest of the study, and the importance of the study. Second, move 2, establishing a niche, has only one step, it focuses on taking a stance opposite of the previous study, pointing out the insufficiency of former research, posing a problem with an existing study, or expanding upon the area of earlier research. Third, move 3, occupying a niche, is composed of three steps. According to Swales, Step 1 is considered to be the key element of move 3 and is divided into two parts, either proposing the reason for the study or presenting certain features of the research. Steps 2 and 3 are to explain major findings and to present how the research paper will proceed.

2.3 Research Gap Strategies

Based on previous discussions about writing an introduction, now you can see why writing an introduction is important, is because the introduction

section plays the most important thing when it comes to write a paper, research article, or a thesis. There are ways to promote the article, one of which is addressing a research gap strategy in the abstracts to show readers the freshness or novelty of their research topic or title (Arianto, et al., 2021), particularly in Move-1 (situating the research/introduction) of the abstract. According to them, the novelty of research addressed in the abstracts is when authors present their research gap strategies to capture the interest of readers and motivate them to go on reading the remaining parts. The abstract functions to place the authors' aims, description of methodology, results, and conclusion (Bathia, 1993; Swales, 1990, 2004). Moreover, if we look deeper, the introduction element of the abstract section not only contains the background, purpose, or objective of the research, but it can also benefit from statements indicating the research gap(s).

Arianto, et al (2021) states that there are five research gap strategies to identify the introduction section in a research article, which are:

1) Claiming nonexistent research dealing with a specific feature, as in the following example below;

- (S1) There have been growing studies focusing on teaching and learning writing in EFL and ESL contexts. Nevertheless, a few studies emphasized on exploring the challenges while teaching writing in university. Moreover, **there is not yet** a study focusing on challenges encountered by English language teachers in teaching writing to junior high school students. Even, a very scarce investigation on the way how the teachers overcome their challenges during teaching English writing.

The extract in S1 was taken from a thesis titled 'Teaching writing to junior high school students: A focus on challenge and solutions'. As seen in S1, the writers claim that no study has ever been conducted focusing on challenges and solutions by ELT in teaching writing, therefore, this study is important.

2) Suggest inadequate research in a particular aspect, as in the following example below;

- (S2) Even though myriad studies have been performed to examine the representation of gender in various ELT textbooks across diverse educational levels (e.g. Fithriani, 2022), **little attention has been addressed** to the scrutiny of Indonesian ELT textbooks (e.g. Ariyanto, 2018 & Pratama, 2019), notably viewed from social actor's analytical perspective (van Leeuwen, 2008). Therefore, the present study is intended to fill the void.

The extract in S2 was taken from a thesis titled 'Gender Representation in Selected Chapter of an Indonesian ELT Textbook: A Critical Discourse Analysis'. As identified in the extract, the writer claims that studies on gender representation in Indonesian ELT textbook have not been conducted frequently enough, and therefore, this study is necessary.

3) Stating limitation(s) in previous research, as in the following example below;

- (S3) However, despite the fact that there are myriad studies regarding YouTube, most studies have studied how YouTube can be used as a digital learning media to improve specific English skills. Moreover, **there has not been sufficient research** exploring students' cognitive engagement from watching English YouTube videos in the EFL context.

The extract in S3 was taken from a thesis titled 'Scrutinizing students' cognitive engagement after watching 'English with Ronnie' YouTube videos in EFL context'. As seen in S3, the writers claim that there is a limited study ever conducted on the topic of cognitive engagement from watching English YouTube videos in the EFL context; therefore, this study is justifiable.

4) Shows contradictive or conflicting previous research findings as in the following example below;

- (S4) Mainly referencing Mudawe's (2018) paper, he discussed the potential and promises, and the instructional capabilities of Google Docs in the light of interactivity and collaborativeness “in enhancing EFL/ESL students’ writing dissertation” (p. 192). **However, the previous study did not state** the kind of perception in particular.

The extract in S4 was taken from a thesis titled ‘Google Docs: Students’ perception on supervisors’ online written feedback in undergraduate thesis writing’. As seen in S4, the writer claims that the findings of the previous study on the instructional capabilities of Google Docs are inconsistent; therefore, this study is necessary.

5) Suggesting solution/s as in the following example below;

- (S5) The contribution of this study is **expected to reveal** professional development represented by English pre-service teacher from the use of reflective practice during ITP experience in Thailand and make the other pre-service teachers to be aware of the use of reflective practice in the educational field.

The extract in S5 was taken from a thesis titled ‘I reflect, therefore, I grow: An Indonesian pre-service teachers’ professional development during International Teaching Practicum (ITP) in Thailand’ written by Novitasari (2020). As indicated in S5, the writer suggests that this research is expected to reveal professional development represented by English pre-service teachers during the ITP experience in Thailand.

2.4 Previous Studies of Writing Introduction Section

Researching an introduction section has been conducted in the previous studies as was conducted by Indrian & Ardi (2019), Devira et al (2021), and Hussain et al (2022). Indrian & Ardi (2019) conducted a study that focuses on the rhetorical structure of undergraduate thesis introduction using the CARS model on three sub-disciplines and found that in Move 1 all three sub-disciplines appeared but did not review previous research, only 3 samples that

presented Move 2, but many researchers did not fill in the gap about previous research, and Move 3 that frequently used, but there are only 3 introductions that did not occupy the move. Devira et al (2021) conducted their research by focusing on genre analysis in undergraduate thesis and using CARS model and found that the students are aware of the crucial elements to introduce the general topic and main focuses of their study. However, the students that write the thesis introduction section are misguided and unstructured, this indicates that the students have a lack of knowledge and familiarity with the generic structure of the thesis introduction section. Hussein et al (2022) focused on eight Ph.D. introduction theses using the CARS model and found that although the three moves of the model were considered to a large extent, the steps were not adhered to religiously due to the short length of the introduction.

2.5 Study of Relevant Research

There are countless studies regarding research gap(s) conducted by Lim (2012), Suryani et al. (2015), Müller-Bloch and Kranz (2015), Chen and Li (2019), and Arianto et al. (2021). Lim (2012) investigated scholars in the field of Management address the RG to convince and persuade readers to accept the novelty of their research findings. Suryani et al. (2015) investigated how Malaysian university researchers in Computer Science address research gap(s) in their research article introductions, they found that the majority of the writers in the data of their study already addressed some research gap in their article introductions. Chen and Li (2019) investigated 40 theses written in English by MA students at a prestigious Chinese university and found that compared to earlier learners, recent learners in their study were more critical in their composition, particularly in writing the introduction. Müller-Bloch and Kranz (2015) investigated research gaps used by authors in 40 RA introductions in the field of Information Systems. They found eight types of research gaps: ‘contradictory evidence’, ‘knowledge void’, ‘action-knowledge conflict’,

‘methodological conflict’, ‘evaluation void’, ‘theory-application void’, ‘parallel presentation’, and ‘sequential presentation’. According to them, among the eight types of RG, ‘knowledge void’ is the most frequently used by the authors in their study.

There is also a more recent study on RG strategy in the field of English language education by Arianto et al. (2021). In their study, Arianto et al. (2021) compared three groups of writers in Applied Linguistics (AL) (i.e., Indonesian doctoral students, Indonesian faculty members, and international journal writers) in the ways they support their research in the article abstracts and introductions. They found that the majority of the writers use one or more of the five different strategies: 1) claiming non-existent research dealing with a specific topic, 2) suggesting inadequate research in a particular aspect, 3) stating limitation(s) in previous research, 4) claiming contradictive or conflicting previous research findings, and 5) suggesting solution/s in abstracts and introductions of their journal articles.